

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A shieldable unit dose needle assembly for administering a unit dose of a vaccine comprising:

a needle holding member having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end including a male tapering surface;

a unit dose needle having a proximal end and a prong end configured to hold a unit dose of a vaccine;

a shield in pivotal engagement with respect to said unit dose needle and pivotally movable between a retracted position pivotally spaced from said prong end of said unit dose needle and a shielded position encompassing said prong end of said unit dose needle; and

a collar having a proximal end and a distal end including a needle end, said unit dose needle extending from said needle end of said collar, said collar surface including a proximal end having a female tapering surface in engagement with the male tapering surface at the distal end of said needle holding member, said collar providing for pivotal movement of said shield between said retracted position and said shielded position.

2. The needle assembly of claim 1, wherein the unit dose needle comprises a bifurcated needle, wherein the prong end includes two pointed prongs which are capable of penetrating or abrading the skin of a patient, and wherein the prongs are separated by a U-shaped channel capable of holding the unit dose of a vaccine.

3. The needle assembly of claim 1, wherein the distal end of said needle holding member includes an annular collar having internal threads adjacent the male tapering surface, and wherein the proximal end of said collar includes structure for threaded engagement with the internal threads of the annular collar when the female tapering surface is in engagement with the male tapering surface.

4. The needle assembly of claim 1, further comprising a projection member coupled to said collar and, a top surface including an outwardly and a distally extending tab.

5. The needle assembly of claim 4, wherein said shield includes a first ramp, said ramp of said shield being able to contact said projection member when said shield is rotated to said retracted position.

6. The needle assembly of claim 5, wherein said projection member is flexibly mounted to said collar.

7. The needle assembly of claim 1, further comprising means for preventing pivotal movement of said shield between the shielded position and the retracted position after the shield has been pivoted to the shielded position.

8. The needle assembly of claim 1, wherein the shield is pivotally connected to the collar through a hanger bar located on said shield and a hook arm located on said collar whereby said hanger bar engages with said hook arm so that said shield may be pivoted with respect to said collar between said retracted position and said shielded position.

9. The needle assembly of claim 1, wherein the needle holding member includes an annular flange extending about the proximal end thereof.

10. A shieldable unit dose assembly, comprising:

a unit dose needle assembly comprising a collar having a female tapering surface at a proximal end thereof and a solid elongated unit dose needle extending from a distal end thereof, the unit dose needle having a length capable of retrieving a unit dose of a vaccine from a separate container and having a patient end for containing and administering the unit dose of a vaccine; and

a needle holding assembly having an elongated body with a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end including a male tapering surface in engagement with the female tapering surface of the collar of the unit dose needle assembly and an annular collar having internal threads in threaded engagement with corresponding structure on the proximal end of the collar, the needle holding assembly further including a shield in pivotal engagement with respect to said unit dose needle assembly and pivotally movable between a retracted position pivotally spaced from said patient end of said unit dose needle and a shielded position encompassing said patient end of said unit dose needle.

11. The needle assembly of claim 10, wherein the needle holding assembly includes an annular flange extending about the proximal end thereof.

12. The needle assembly of claim 10, wherein the unit dose needle comprises a bifurcated needle, wherein the prong end includes two pointed prongs which are capable of penetrating or abrading the skin of a patient, and wherein the prongs are separated by a U-shaped channel capable of holding the unit dose of a vaccine.

13. The needle assembly of claim 10, further comprising a projection member coupled to said collar and, a top surface including an outwardly and a distally extending tab.

14. The needle assembly of claim 13, wherein said shield includes a first ramp, said ramp of said shield being able to contact said projection member when said shield is rotated to said retracted position.

15. The needle assembly of claim 14, wherein said projection member is flexibly mounted to said collar.

16. The needle assembly of claim 11, wherein the shield is pivotally connected to the collar through a hanger bar located on said shield and a hook arm located on said collar whereby said hanger bar engages with said hook arm so that said shield may be pivoted with respect to said collar between said retracted position and said shielded position.

17. The needle assembly of claim 10, further comprising means for preventing pivotal movement of said shield between the shielded position and the retracted position after the shield has been pivoted to the shielded position.